

Glenda Wiles

From: WAYNE DRAKE [wayneandjeridrake@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, March 02, 2007 10:19 AM
To: Glenda Wiles
Subject: Fw: Hamilton Wal-Mart

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 MAR 02 2007
 Hamilton County Commissioners

Well, well...what a fine mess the County is now in and just where should the citizens begin with the "I told you so". There is an old saying "The road to perdition is paved with excuses" and that is exactly where procrastination by city officials has gotten us.

Jeri Drake

----- Original Message -----

From: Wittenberg, Joyce
Sent: Friday, March 02, 2007 9:54 AM
Subject: Hamilton Wal-Mart

Dear Interested Party:

Thank you for your comment concerning the proposed Wal-Mart development on Blodgett Creek near Hamilton. I apologize for not having gotten back to you sooner, but we have received nearly 80 comments about the project so far, most of which have called for DEQ to conduct a full-blown EIS for the project.

First, you should know that DEQ has received plans for a drinking water well, but otherwise, we've seen no design plans for the proposed facility. There's nothing for us to study yet since Wal-Mart has not submitted a full proposal.

The decision to allow a large development like a Wal-Mart is a local zoning issue. Local zoning issues, such as growth impacts, do not trigger an EIS. The Wal-Mart will probably need drinking water and wastewater system approvals from DEQ. In making those determinations, DEQ can determine whether such a project will meet our standards. If it does, we have to issue the wastewater and drinking water permit. If it fails to meet standards, we will deny the permit. That's the only role we have in such a project.

For this reason, it is unlikely that DEQ will conduct a full-blown EIS on the proposed Wal-Mart. We will make a final determination after we receive the actual design plans for the facility.

Finally, you should also know that the Montana State Legislature passed a law several years ago that made the Montana Environmental Policy Act "non-substantive." What this means is that the Montana Environmental Policy Act no longer gives us authority to do anything about the impacts that are disclosed in an EIS. If an EIS were to document, say, a threat to wildlife from a particular project, we cannot use that information to deny or place conditions on our approval.

Once again, thank you for your comments. I also urge you to share your feelings about this project with your local officials. We will add your name to an interested party mailing list for this project.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Oppen, Director
 MT DEQ

3/2/2007